

**VERNON TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**Transportation and School Security**

**Parent Handbook**

**2020-2021**



# School Security and Crisis Management

Student safety and school security are of paramount importance to the Vernon School District.

Vernon Township Public Schools have in place prevention, intervention, and post intervention plans to deal with issues of safety and security at all of our schools. These plans have been developed in coordination with local, county, and state officials and meet all requirements set forth by the State Department of Education and the State Homeland Security Office. In all cases, the safety of the student is paramount. Parents play a vital role in school safety as outlined below. Please make your family familiar with these procedures.

Periodically throughout the year, drills will be held at each school to simulate a building evacuation and a lockdown. Should an emergency or natural disaster occur during school hours, your child will be cared for at school. Appropriate action will be taken to mitigate the crisis. Your cooperation is essential in any emergency for the safety of both students and staff, and to provide for expeditious reunification with your child.

It is important that you follow the guidelines outlined below:

1. If your child takes medication at school, insure that at least a 24 hour supply is available in the nurse's office.
2. Do **NOT** telephone the school. Phone lines will be needed to conduct emergency communication. Parents will be notified via our emergency notification system, local radio, district website, Facebook, and Twitter accounts.
3. Parents should refrain from coming to the school in an emergency as there will be no access to the school. Traffic may impede emergency responders from gaining access to the school.
4. In certain emergencies, it may be necessary to release students from a location other than their school building. By monitoring our methods of communications as listed above, you will be made aware of where and when you can pick up your child.
5. You need to be aware that in certain situations school officials will be unable to release students until the police give their approval and clear the scene of danger.
6. It is important that your child's emergency contact information is accurate. Choose emergency contacts who are available to pick up your child if necessary. The school will only release your child to those persons you have designated.
7. Busing will be available for all students upon their release. Buses will use their normal routes if conditions permit.

The decision to release students will be based on whether it is safe to transport students, the police, emergency service needs, and the nature of the emergency. In the event an emergency takes place during the time students are being picked up to be transported to school, students will be kept on the bus, additional pickups will cease, and the bus will be directed to a predetermined secure location. The emergency notification system will be activated along with our other methods of communication as previously stated.

The safety of students can be greatly enhanced if parents discuss security issues with their children. The following areas are of particular concern:

1. Use of cell phones should be discouraged. The signal from a cell phone has the potential to detonate an explosive device and may overwhelm cell towers needed for emergency communications.
2. The importance of reporting suspicious conversations, actions, or internet activities that may indicate a potential for violence or to disrupt a school building. Students should be encouraged to contact a school administrator, or discuss the issue with their parents.
3. Help your child understand that the culture of not "telling" on others does not apply when the safety of others is at stake.
4. Discuss the importance of following directions in an emergency and the necessity of paying attention during school emergency drills.

Your cooperation in discussing these matters with your family is greatly appreciated. Your understanding of these matters will help alleviate concern during emergencies.

When you visit one of our schools, it is necessary that you provide identification in the form of your driver's license. The Vernon School District uses the Raptor Visitor Management system in our schools. This system not only provides visitors with a visitor's pass, but it also screens for convicted sex offenders. Raptor also identifies persons who, through court order, are not allowed contact with your child. If you have documentation regarding this, it should be submitted to your child's school so that we can update our records and enter it into the system.

Mr. Scott Waleck  
Office of School Security/Random Drug Testing  
973-764-6106 [swaleck1@vtsd.com](mailto:swaleck1@vtsd.com)  
Fax: 973-764-0858

## **SCHOOL BUS SAFETY**

***The mission of the Vernon Township School District Transportation Department is to safely transport our students to and from school, activities and athletic events each day in a respectful and caring environment. To promote student safety and your child's well-being, we have prepared this handbook to assist us with teaching your child the bus rider rules and responsibilities, so that our most precious cargo is transported safely each and every day.***

Jamie Van Gilst  
Vernon Township School District  
Transportation Coordinator

973-764-4344 [jvangilst@vtsd.com](mailto:jvangilst@vtsd.com)  
Fax: 973-764-7776

Visit our web site at [www.vtsd.com](http://www.vtsd.com)

## **Should your child be late in arriving home or not get off at the appropriate bus stop, you should immediately contact:**

- The school your child attends. If no one is available at the school, contact:
- The Board of Education Office (764-2900, push 0). If no one is available at the Board Office, contact:
- Your child's bus contractor (see last page), or
- The Vernon Police Department (764-6155) and they will contact a school official

It is important that the Vernon School District has working telephone numbers from you on file, in case of an emergency. Please make sure that all forms on line are completed via the parent portal with up to date phone numbers as soon as possible.

We hope this never happens, however, In the event of a school bus accident, the procedures listed below will be followed:

- Bus Company will contact the police and/or ambulance, and the Transportation Department.
- Transportation Department will contact the Superintendent of Schools, the Business Administrator and the Principal of the School.
- School Nurse/staff will contact you, our parents or guardians of students involved in the accident. Every attempt will be made to contact you, and the parents or guardians.

In the event of a school bus accident, the following steps must be followed for a parent to receive payment for any medical bills:

- The parent/guardian is to submit the medical bills to their personal auto insurance carrier and/or their individual/group hospitalization carrier.
- If any amount still remains, the parent/guardian must submit those bills to any other collectible insurance, which may include a student accident policy.
- If any amount still remains, the parent/guardian could present the school bus contractor with bills.

### **BEHAVIOR: CONDUCT**

Please be advised that all of our school buses are equipped with security cameras. The sole purpose of the security camera is to monitor student behavior on the ride to and from school. In the event that there is a complaint regarding misconduct on the bus, the video will be used as evidence in any formal or informal disciplinary proceedings, including but not limited to suspension of bus privileges. All videotapes

will be maintained under the security of the Vernon Board of Education and **viewed only by the school administration at his or her discretion.**

All students are expected to behave in a proper manner while on the school bus.

The bus driver must ensure that all students get to their school in a safe and timely fashion. The bus driver will report all misconduct to the school principal. In cases where the safety of the driver or students on the bus is in question, the driver will contact the police.

Please review the following bus conduct rules with your child:

1. All students must wear their seat belts. (R.S. 39:3B-11)  
Please practice with your child putting on and taking off the seat belt.
2. No eating or drinking is permitted on the school bus.

Several students in our school district have been diagnosed with life threatening food allergies to peanuts, peanut oil, and any product containing peanuts. If your child(ren) has had a nut product before coming to school, please be sure they have washed their hands thoroughly prior to arriving at the bus stop. Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

3. Students must be seated, facing forward, at all times when the bus is in motion. There is to be no sitting or standing in the aisles.
4. Care must be used when entering or exiting the bus. Students must not run, push or trip others.
5. No part of the student's body may stick out from a window opening, particularly their hands or head.
6. Students should not bring sharp objects or glass containers onto the school bus.
7. No objects may be thrown on the bus or out the window.
8. Fighting and excessive misbehavior of any kind will not be tolerated.
9. Exiting from the bus is only through the front door. In an emergency and at the driver's direction, the rear emergency exit may be used.
10. Directions by the driver must be obeyed at all times.
11. Students will be responsible for any damage they may cause.
12. Bullying is NOT acceptable behavior and will not be tolerated on the school bus.

## **BUS SCHEDULE**

A bus schedule will be posted on the parent portal in mid-August. Please check this schedule and contact our Transportation Department as soon as possible should any changes need to be made.

The scheduled bus arrival pick up time indicated on your child's bus schedule is **approximate**. The bus driver may adjust the time accordingly via written or verbal notification by the bus driver or the Transportation Department. Please plan to be at your child's bus stop at least 5 minutes prior to the scheduled bus arrival pick up time.

## **BUS STOP**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT ON THE FIRST FEW DAYS OF SCHOOL, EXTRA SAFETY PRECAUTIONS ARE TAKEN AT CEDAR MOUNTAIN SCHOOL TO ENSURE THAT YOUR CHILD GETS ONTO THE CORRECT SCHOOL BUS. THEREFORE, BE ADVISED THAT DURING THESE FIRST FEW DAYS, IT MAY TAKE UP TO AN HOUR FOR YOUR CHILD TO ARRIVE BACK TO THEIR ASSIGNED BUS STOP AT THE END OF THE SCHOOL DAY.**

- It is the parent's responsibility to transport their child to and from the bus stop. Please have your child ready and waiting for the school bus 5 minutes prior to your assigned bus pick up time.
- Parents are asked to supervise their children at the bus stop. Please do not allow your child to bring toys, skateboards, etc. to the bus stop. Children must be made aware that the street is a roadway not a playground, therefore the children must stay to the side of the road.
- Please do not allow your child to play on private property.
- Parents are asked not to obstruct the roadway with their vehicle. Please park the appropriate distances from intersections and stop signs as follows:
  - No parking within 50 feet of a stop sign
  - No parking within 25 feet of the nearest intersecting road

Please keep in mind that there must be a minimum of 15 feet of clear roadway for traffic to pass freely (especially emergency vehicles). No unauthorized person should stop or direct traffic.

- It is illegal to pass a school bus which is stopped for the purpose of receiving or discharging children (39:4-128.1) until the flashing red light is no longer exhibited by the bus. If you see this violation occur, please provide the license plate and brief description to the Vernon Township Police Department. With this information, a

police report can be generated to document the incident. Then, a complaint can be signed against the registered owner of the vehicle.

- It is important that all parents/guardians become aware of their child's bus route number along with the contractor who owns the bus. This information is displayed on the exterior of the school bus. In the case of car routes, this information can be immediately requested from the driver. See the last page of this handbook for all bus numbers, contractor names, and phone numbers.

## **CHANGE OF ADDRESS/TELEPHONE**

Please contact us by phone (973-764-4344), email (jvangilst@vtsd.com), or fax (973-764-7776), if you need to change your address or phone number, or you may utilize our online "Bus Stop Change Request Form" found on our web site. Please be advised that when you change your address, you must provide our transportation office with your new proof of residency before any changes can be made. All changes may take up to 3 days to process. Bus stop changes may not be honored during the last week of August through the first week of school depending on the nature of the request.

## **CHANGE OF PICK-UP/DROP OFF ADDRESS**

There may be times when your child may need to be picked up and/or dropped off at a different address in Vernon.

**The Vernon School District does not allow this, except in cases of an emergency or urgent need.** All requests to change the pick up or drop off destination must be made through the Transportation Department. If approved, the district will contact the bus company. Please do not contact the bus company to make these changes.

**Please do not request that your child ride a different bus home unless it is an emergency.**

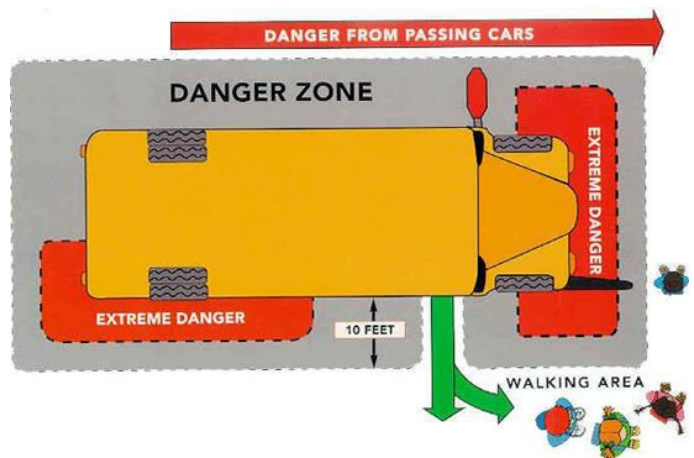
## **COMMUNICATION WITH BUS DRIVERS**

**Please do not discuss problems with the bus driver at the bus stop.** If you have a concern, please contact the Transportation Office at 973-764-4344 and we will be happy to assist you.

Parents, guardians and/or the general public are prohibited from going on the school bus without the permission of the bus driver. **PLEASE DO NOT GO ONTO THE BUS !**

## **DANGER ZONE**

The danger zone is the area on all sides of the school bus where children are in the most danger of being hit. Children should stay ten feet away from the bus and never go behind it. They should take five giant steps in front of the bus before crossing so they can be seen by the bus driver. Please review the danger zones of the school bus with your child.





## **DELAYED OPENING**

All students will follow the Vernon School District **2 hour delay**. Information regarding delayed openings will be sent via our School Messenger Alert System.

## **DROP OFF STUDENTS**

It is the expectation of our school district that all parents, guardians or a designated adult be present whenever their primary-grade child gets on or off the school bus each day. **Our procedures require a parent, or responsible adult to be at the bus stop to receive all children who attend Cedar Mountain School.** The parent must be seen by the bus driver before the child will be released. If no one is present at the bus stop to receive your child, please be aware of our procedure as follows:

- The bus will complete the bus route and return to your child's bus stop.
- If no one is at the stop at the return trip, your child will be brought back to Cedar Mountain School. You will be responsible for transporting your child home.

## **EARLY DISMISSAL**

In the event that schools in Vernon Township are closed due to inclement weather, there will be no transportation for any Vernon student. Transportation will be cancelled for Vernon resident students who are attending schools in other school districts as well.

Information regarding delayed openings, early dismissals or closings will be sent via our School Messenger Alert System. This information will also be posted on our website ([www.vtsd.com](http://www.vtsd.com)), the Vernon Schools App website, Facebook, and Twitter ([vermontwpsd](https://twitter.com/vermontwpsd)) If inclement weather develops during the school day, the Superintendent of Schools may decide to announce an early dismissal for all Vernon Schools. Please be sure your child's contact information is accurate so that you receive these important alerts. In the event of an early dismissal, **buses will depart our schools** approximately:

VTHS :	11:25 a.m.
LH & GM	12:35 p.m.
CM & RH	1:25 p.m.

## **PASSENGERS**

Pursuant to New Jersey State Law, only the following people may be authorized to be on the school vehicle:

- Enrolled eligible pupils
- Special Education Transportation Aides
- School Personnel
- Public Safety Officials
- School Bus Company Personnel

Parents, guardians, relatives, friends of pupils, and the general public are prohibited from entering the vehicle unless expressly invited by the school district in cooperation with the bus company. The safety of all of the pupils on the bus is the district's paramount concern.  
**PLEASE PARENTS DO NOT GO ON THE BUS!**

### **SEAT BELTS**

All school buses are equipped with seat belts. All students must wear their seat belt while riding on the school bus. Please remind your child to keep their seat belt fastened during their ride on the school bus. If your child attends Cedar Mountain Primary School, please practice with them how to buckle and unbuckle a seat belt prior to the first day of school.

### **WEAPONS, DRUG, ALCOHOL, TOBACCO USE/POSSESSION**

The Vernon School District has a zero tolerance policy for possession of weapons, drug use or possession of drugs. If the bus driver observes a student violating this policy by possessing a weapon, possessing or consuming drugs, or distributing drugs or alcohol or if the student appears to be under the influence of a chemical, that behavior will be reported to the school administrator immediately.

**REGULAR BUS ROUTES 2020-2021**

Krapf School Bus Company: 973-721-9024  
 First Student Lafayette Bus: 973-579-5272

Decker Transportation: 973-764-8005  
 D.W. Clark & Son 973-827-7640

PRIMARY SCHOOL		MIDDLE SCHOOL		HIGH SCHOOL	
BUS	CONTRACTOR	BUS	CONTRACTOR	BUS	CONTRACTOR
C1	First Student	L1	Decker	V1	Decker
C2	Decker	L2	Decker	V2	Decker
C3	Decker	L3	Krapf	V3	Decker
C4	First Student	L4	Decker	V4	Decker
C5	Decker	L5	First Student	V5	Krapf
C6	First Student	L6	Krapf	V7	First Student
C7	Decker	L9	Decker	V8	Krapf
C8	Decker	L13	Decker	V9	First Student
C10	Krapf	L14	D.W. Clark	V14	Krapf
C12	Decker	L17	Krapf	V15	First Student
C13	First Student	L19	Krapf	V17	Decker
C17	Decker	L20	Decker	V19	First Student
R1	Decker	L21	Decker	V20	Decker
R2	First Student	G1	Decker	V21	First Student
R5	Decker	G3	First Student	V22	First Student
R6	Krapf	G5	First Student	V23	Krapf
R7	Krapf	G7	First Student	V25	Krapf
R9	Decker	G8	First Student	V26	Decker
R10	Krapf	G11	First Student	V27	Krapf
R11	Decker	G12	Krapf	V28	Decker
R12	First Student	G13	Decker	V31	Krapf
R13	First Student	G15	Krapf		
R14	Krapf	G15W	Krapf		
		G16	First Student		
		G17	First Student		
		G19	Krapf		
		G20	Decker		
		G22	First Student		
		G22	First Student		